

SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

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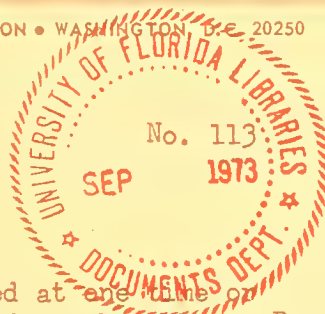
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SIMPLE HOME REPAIRS

Inside Jobs. Those little repair jobs needed at one time or another around the house are simple to do--if you know how. But, for an inexperienced person, a leaking faucet can bring tears to the eyes and a broken electric plug can leave one completely in the dark. A new USDA publication has been prepared by an Extension Service housing specialist to help even the least experienced person do some of these simple jobs. In "Simple Home Repairs... Inside" step-by-step directions show how to accomplish nine frequently-needed indoor repairs, such as leaking faucets, broken plugs, sticking doors, holes in the wallboard or plaster. Other sections give tips on how to use basic tools--hammers, screwdrivers, pliers--and explain the intricacies of nails, screws, and bolts. The 28-page booklet is liberally illustrated and written in easy-to-follow language. It is designed to serve as a householder's home repair manual or as a teaching aid--each of the 11 sections can be easily reproduced as separate leaflets. Copies of "Simple Home Repairs...Inside" (PA-1034) are 40 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 or for 25 cents each from GPO bookstores.

GYPSY MOTH HUNT

Hitchhikers Non Grata. If you camp in any of 11 northeastern states this summer, chances are your trailer or camping rig will be searched when you leave. Nothing personal--it's just that a gypsy moth may have hitched a ride with your caravan. The vehicle inspection is part of a USDA campaign to stop the spread of this destructive insect whose appetite for leaves has defoliated and damaged trees on thousands of acres of forestland and backyards in the northeast. Two major camping groups--the National Campers and Hikers Association (NCHA) and the North American Family Camping Association (NAFCA)--are cooperating with USDA in the campaign. Using traps and training provided by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, NCHA members in 37 states will maintain a trapping program to detect any gypsy moths which spread outside the northeastern states. NAFCA members are serving as volunteers to inspect recreational vehicles. The program, which began in mid-May, will continue until Labor Day.



SUMMER FOOD PREVIEW

Better weather, larger food supplies, and Government actions are cooperating to stop the rise in food prices and to help to limit increases after the current freeze is scheduled to end not later than mid-August. Even so, retail food prices will average above the 1972 level, reflecting the strong price upsurge that has already occurred.

The last six months have been hard on food prices. While consumers came to the store with considerably more income than a year before, the supplies of food reaching counters were somewhat smaller--especially for red meat, poultry products, and noncitrus fruits. Food prices in the first half of 1973 averaged about 10 per cent higher than a year before.

Mandatory ceilings will hold prices in check, at least until August 12. Prices of food as well as nearly all other goods and services can go no higher than they were in the first week of June. Although such unprocessed products as fresh fruits, vegetables, and eggs are not regulated at the farm level, they still face the ceilings imposed at the crucial retail level. During the Phase I freeze in 1971, these products were allowed to fluctuate freely at all levels while other retail prices were frozen.

Don't be misled by the term "frozen". Prices can drop whenever supplies increase or demand diminishes. For example, prices may drop for some fresh fruits and vegetables in season later this summer.

Most foods, however, will be bumping ceiling rates during the 60-day freeze period. Supplies of all major protein foods are tight this summer. Higher feed costs have limited the pace of livestock and poultry production, as well as milk output. And pork production also is seasonally smallest this time of year.

Prices of most staple items, canned and frozen goods, and convenience foods will be held against ceiling levels by both high ingredient costs (such as wheat in flour or soybean oil in margarine) and recent cost pressures in the food industry.

Over the last six months of the year, however, easing of tight food stocks will help relieve the pressure on prices. Larger food imports are forecast. Since farmers have increased acreage, if the weather cooperates, the harvest of fall crops will be larger. A more normal fruit harvest and a greater acreage of vegetables are in view. Supplies of red meat and poultry will be seasonally larger.

While the freeze temporarily shields shoppers from price increases, Government officials are designing Phase IV, a new set of possible price controls, and exploring new avenues for easing supply pressures on food prices.

The administration has requested authority to allocate food and feed supplies between our domestic and export markets. The administration also wants authority to lift tariffs on meat and other needed food imports.

Steps are being considered to assure farmers enough fuel to accomplish their fall harvesting and grain drying chores. With millions of extra acres to harvest, fuel needs will climb beyond their usual harvesttime peaks.

SUMMER FOOD PREVIEW

Even with larger supplies of basic commodities such as corn, wheat, or soybeans this fall, the full impact on food prices won't be immediate. This is especially so for meat, poultry, and dairy products because of the time lag between the decision to increase production and the day when products get to market.

Meanwhile, here's what you can expect for food supplies and prices after the current freeze expires:

Meat prices might ease a little from ceiling levels. Pork production will be rising seasonally, and some expansion in beef is possible.

Same's true for poultry. The main turkey marketing time is ahead. Given some relief in feed prices and prospects for higher incomes, farmers may increase the output of both broilers and eggs, pushing supplies upward.

Milk output will continue a little below the level of last year, and prices of dairy products during June-December will average well above the last six months of 1972.

More fruit is on the way than last summer. The harvest is expected to rebound some from last year's extremely small crops (weather was the cause)--more sweet cherries, pears, apricots, and California grapes are forecast. Fresh peach supplies reaching their peaks in August are forecast moderately larger than last year's reduced amount. Continuing the trend of past years, and considering the good grove conditions generally, there may well be another very large orange crop this winter.

As for potatoes, prices will move seasonally lower, once the fall crop comes to market in September. Frozen potato products and instant potatoes are still an economical supplement to fresh potatoes.

With more normal onion supplies, prices recently have returned to a lower-priced range. Late summer should bring further increases in supply. Lettuce prices should moderate this summer from levels of late May and early June.

Vegetable growers plan to harvest larger crops for processing this year, but canners' and freezers' stocks are way down. So prices will balance out near their present levels through this summer and fall.

Coffee prices have risen on world markets; they will stay up for the rest of 1973.

PLENTIFUL FOODS

Lists And A Special Announcement. The Plentiful Foods Program, which provides assistance to the food trade and the news media in stimulating consumption of foods in surplus supply, is soon to be discontinued as a separate entity. As of August 1, the program's activities will be provided through other divisions of its administering agency, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. The action will result in greater coordination of Plentiful Foods activities with other commodity marketing programs of AMS and in administrative savings. Also, Plentiful Foods activities in recent months have declined as a result of strong domestic and foreign demand for U.S. foods and activities are expected to continue light during the foreseeable future, USDA officials said. Meanwhile: The June Plentiful Foods List includes products of the pasta family, dry beans, corn meal, grits and eggs.



WATCH THOSE PESTICIDES

Know How And How Not To Use Them. It's a fact of life that pests are almost always with us--in our house, yard, or garden. They come in a variety of types and with their own peculiar characteristics. Some fly or crawl; some sprout; some burrow. Some are harmful and some are just pesky. Chemicals called pesticides have been developed to help control or to rid you of these nuisances. And while your kids, pets, and neighbors may have characteristics similiar to pests, these chemicals are not meant for them. For the safety of yourself, your family, neighbors, pets, wild animals, as well as for "good" bugs and plants, it is important to know how to handle and use pesticides properly, which ones to use, and what to do with them when they are not in use. Some important tips on pesticide safety at home and in the garden are given in a leaflet and in a color slide set, both from USDA. Free copies of the leaflet, "Safe Use of Pesticides" (PA-589), are available from the Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. The slide set, "Pesticides In and Around the Home" (C-118), may be purchased for \$13.00 from the Photography Division of the Office of Communication. The visual also comes as a color filmstrip, which sells for \$5.50, from the Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. A cassette with soundtrack is available from either source for \$3.00. Teachers, garden clubs, youth groups, environmental clubs and other such organizations will find an informative and interesting program can be built around these information materials.

IMPROVED RABIES VACCINE

For Dogs And Cats. A new type of rabies vaccine for dogs and cats was recently licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The new product, called "rabies vaccine, killed virus, murine origin," provides high levels of potency along with a high degree of safety and freedom from side effects. The new vaccine, available through veterinarians only, is already in production by the licensed manufacturer and will be widely available within several weeks. Officials of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which issues licenses for animal vaccines, said the vaccination is by injection into muscle tissues. Puppies and kittens should be vaccinated at three months of age or revaccinated then if they were vaccinated earlier. Vaccination should be repeated yearly. The officials emphasized that the new vaccine is authorized for use only in dogs and cats.

FROM HOOF TO GRILL

All That Walks Is Not Steak. Less than half of a steer on the hoof ends up as "take home" beef. Where does it all go? A 1000-pound live steer dresses out to a 600-pound carcass; the 600 pounds trims down to 162 pounds of fat, bone, and waste, leaving 438 pounds of saleable beef. Only about 12 percent of each animal ends up as those mouthwatering broilable steaks such as sirloin, porterhouse, T-bone, club and rib steaks.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of SERVICE, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone (202) 447-5437.
